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WASHINGTON

June 19, 1982

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State Dept. review completed

MEMORANDUM TO: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ALEXANDER M. HAIG, JR. 

SUBJECT: MY JUNE 18 SESSION WITH GROMYKO

This session lasted five hours, and we concentrated (by his choice as guest and thus first speaker in our UN Mission) on principles and on arms control. We will deal with critical regional security issues when we resume tomorrow; he told me he would start with the Middle East, and I told him I would start with Poland. It was a tough session, and I expect tomorrow's exchange to be similarly rough.

Gromyko was clearly on the defensive, following your successful European trip, the unveiling of your program for arms control and your U.N. speech. He complained forcefully and at length that in fashioning our arms control proposals, we have ignored the long-standing Soviet insistence upon "equal security". His presentation was one long protestation of Soviet innocence while blaming the U.S. for the deterioration of our relationship and international relations generally.

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His detailed comments on arms control made clear again that when the Soviets talk about equal security they mean we must admit that an overall nuclear and conventional balance currently exists because they deserve special compensation for their geography and for our Allies' military strength and systems. He pressed hard for the resuscitation of inadequate arms control agreements of the past, especially the Soviet 1974 Vladivostok accord and SALT II. He reiterated the Soviet nuclear non-first-use pledge he made at the U.N. on Tuesday.

In response, I told him in no uncertain terms that strict equality is the only basis for agreements between us; that previous agreements were inadequate because they failed to limit the most destabilizing systems in both sides' arsenals; and that reductions in these systems are the only good answer. I told him that the nuclear non-first-use pledge is entirely self-serving given the tremendous Soviet conventional advantage, and restated that in NATO Europe, the West would never be the first to

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initiate conflict at any level. It is the Soviet Union, I pointed out, that bears full responsibility for deterioration in relations because it has used and continues to use or help others to use force.

Overall, I came away from the session impressed with how worried and disturbed Gromyko was at the degree to which we have seized the high ground and the initiative in East-West relations. What worries the Soviets the most is your comprehensive program for arms control.

American newsmen tell us he is planning a major press conference for Monday (the day he was originally scheduled to depart for Moscow), and I expect him to make some of the same points he made yesterday, and in general, to try to regain some of the high ground for the Soviets through accusations that we have gone over to the offensive and are refusing to negotiate seriously and sincerely etc., in contrast to them. I therefore plan to meet with the press today, partly to draw some of his poison preemptively, mainly to maintain the offensive on arms control and East-West relations overall that you have seized.

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